

Amendments to the Claims

Listing of the Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A fuel injection valve for an internal combustion engine comprising a nozzle fixed to a leading end portion of a nozzle holder, with the nozzle being configured such that a nozzle needle inserted into a guide hole inside a nozzle body is guided by the guide hole and moves in an axial direction to open/close an injection hole,

wherein an oil pool for storing a high-pressure fuel is formed at one end of the guide hole, and at least part of a gap formed between the nozzle needle and the guide hole has a tapered shape that widens toward the nozzle holder from the one end of the guide hole to an opposite end of the guide hole,

whereby a solidified matter in the oil pool is discharged through the tapered shape gap to a lower-pressure portion of the nozzle holder.

2. (Previously presented) The fuel injection valve for an internal combustion engine of claim 1, wherein the entire gap has a tapered shape that widens toward the nozzle holder.

3. (Previously presented) The fuel injection valve for an internal combustion engine of claim 1, wherein the tapered shape of the gap is a linear tapered shape.

4. (Previously presented) The fuel injection valve for an internal combustion engine of claim 2, wherein the tapered shape of the gap is a linear tapered shape.

5. (Previously presented) The fuel injection valve for an internal combustion engine of claim 1, wherein the gap has a tapered shape as a result of a tapered portion being formed in at least the guide hole.

6. (Previously presented) The fuel injection valve for an internal combustion engine of claim 1, wherein the gap has a tapered shape as a result of a tapered portion being formed in at least the nozzle needle.